

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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PC

Minutes of the Committee on STAFFING

July 11, 1979

The meeting was conducted by Mr. William Bohling, Vice Chairman of the IAG Staffing Committee. Thirty-nine representatives from twenty-three departments and agencies were present. The formal agenda announced to IAG Staffing Committee members for this meeting included:

- (1) Update on CSRA implementation;
- (2) Conversion of Announcement 424 to SCORE;
- (3) Alternatives to PACE; and,
- (4) Delegation of Authority to make appointments of severely handicapped individuals under Schedule A Authority 213.3102(u).

Copies of FPM Letter 300-27 "Noncompetitive Appointment of 30 Percent Disabled Veterans" and FPM Letter 307-13 "Veterans Readjustment Appointments" were distributed at the meeting.

Announcements

Mr. Bohling made the following announcements:

- o Mr. Arch Ramsay is now the Associate Director of Staffing Services.
- o Mr. George McQuoid, former Associate Director for Agency Relations who retired in June, has been replaced by Mr. S. B. Pranger who was the Director of Personnel at the Department of Agriculture.
- o Mr. John Fossum, Deputy Associate Director for Staffing, has been detailed to the Department of Agriculture as Acting Director of Personnel.
- o Agencies are not giving employees of the Panama Canal Zone enough time to return their O.F.5's (inquiry of availability form). Because of the mail situation between the States and the Canal Zone, agencies are advised to give these employees additional time to respond. (This comment refers to the Special Placement Program for Panama Canal Zone employees who are being separated as a result of implementation of the Panama Canal Treaty).

Update on CSRA Implementation

Mr. Tom O'Connor of the Office of Staffing Policies stated that because of new statutory and Presidential requirements for additional publicity and for public participation in the regulation process, many of the new OPM regulations have been issued on an interim basis.

In the staffing area, there are (9) nine interim regulations. An updated list was distributed to the attendees at the last IAG meeting.

Mr. O'Connor informed the attendees that (8) eight of the regulations have been published in FPM Bulletin 300-50 dated March 30, 1979 and the ninth regulation (concerning reduction-in-force) was published in FPM Bulletin 351-4 dated March 26, 1979.

Mr. O'Connor also mentioned that OPM is in the final stages of putting together comments from agencies, unions and others for the Director's action. Final regulations should be published in the Federal Register within the next 3 or 4 weeks.

Conversion of Announcement 424 to SCORE

✓ The current publication "Federal Forecast for Engineers" and copies of the new application packages for Engineers, Physical Sciences and Mathematics positions were distributed.

There are three separate packages for each discipline. Each package contains five parts, as follows:

- (1) Qualifications Information Statement (QIS) which describes the qualification requirements for all disciplines and fields covered at grades GS-5 through GS-15 and replaces the old announcement.
- (2) Competition Notice (CN) which indicates the "how to apply" and employment opportunity information. This form changes quarterly.
- (3) Federal employment applications and forms booklet which will be used in place of the S.F. 171.
- (4) Geographic code listing sheet.
- (5) Occupational supplement (Form B).

These forms are available through the Washington Area Office to agencies in the Washington, D.C. area. Field installations may obtain them from their Job Information Centers and register-holding offices. However, applications will not be made readily available to agencies who are not actually recruiting for engineers. Ms. Randall explained that the forms are costly, they are only used for competitive examinations and, since changes are constantly being made, OPM does not want too many of them in circulation when they become obsolete.

Ms. Randall called attention to FPM Bulletin 337-43 which indicates the changes for Engineers, Physical Sciences and Mathematics positions.

Ms. Randall informed the attendees that the examinations for Nurses, and Life Sciences will also be automated.

Mr. Al Howerton, Chief of Recruitment Management, commented on the new automated system for engineers, physical sciences and mathematics. He stated that there are major recruiting problems in most of the engineering specializations beyond grade GS-7 and in certain geographic areas. OPM has done some advertising and has been fairly successful in obtaining responses from the ads. He also stated that the Competition Notice is extremely significant and, to the extent that OPM continues to use automated nationwide examinations, they expect it will be a major element of OPM's recruitment and applicant control process.

Alternatives to PACE

Mr. Don Holum, Chief of the Office of Examination Plans, discussed the alternatives to PACE.

He informed the attendees that an alternative examination plan has been agreed upon for Claims Representative positions with the Social Security Administration. These positions will no longer be filled from PACE. Applicants must apply directly to the Social Security Administration in Baltimore. Since a written test will not be used, applicants will be considered on the basis of education and/or experience.

Mr. Holum also informed the attendees that an attempt to develop a plan that will meet the needs of all agencies is in the proposal stage. OPM will continue to utilize the written test; however, OPM is contemplating a much lower cutoff point.

Under the new PACE procedures, agencies will be able to accept applications directly from qualified PACE eligibles. Agencies who elect to maintain their own lists of eligibles for PACE should notify OPM and enter into a delegation agreement; OPM will inform eligibles concerning "how to apply." This delegation is completely voluntary to agencies. If an agency does not wish to maintain its own list of eligibles, they may continue to obtain certification from OPM.

Mr. Holum stated that, in the future, there will be a much fuller delegation of PACE examining authority to agencies. No prior approval will be required for PACE rating procedures. The plan will be described to the public in detail.

He also stated that outstanding scholars make up 25 percent of the PACE applicants. Under the current examination, outstanding scholars are required to take the written test. However, under the proposed plan, outstanding scholars will not be required to take a written test. They may apply directly to agencies for entry on their lists of eligibles and consideration based on educational background and/or experience.

According to Mr. Holum, agencies can use written test scores for ranking; however, if they prefer, they may rank candidates on the basis of education and/or experience without regard to test scores.

Mr. Holum made mention of the possibility of experimenting with the "Model Staffing Plan" which is now under consideration. The concept is to turn over much more examining authority to agencies with fewer constraints than in the past. The Chicago Region will be used in the experiment in the near future in connection with Mid-Level positions at grade levels GS-9 or higher.

The question was raised concerning the impact PACE will have on the availability of minorities. As a result of the new PACE program, it is anticipated that more minorities will be reached for employment; however, OPM cannot predict what the final results will be at this time.

Delegation of Authority to make Appointments of Severely Handicapped Individuals under Schedule A Authority 213.3102(u)

Ms. Sandra Heaton of the Office of Selective Placement discussed this provision. She stated that OPM delegated authority to agencies to make Schedule A appointments of severely handicapped individuals without prior OPM approval effective April 4, 1979. She called attention to FPM Letter 306-16 dated May 21, 1979 which contains instructions on the delegation. The criteria to be used by agencies in determining eligibility for Schedule A appointments has not changed. However, she informed the attendees that OPM has uncovered a few problems recently, as set forth below:

- o Problems were found in record keeping. Confidential records, such as those related to the handicapped authority, must be kept according to the existing maintenance, use and disposition schedules for medical records.
- o Records should not be sent to the Federal Records Center in St. Louis and should not be used routinely.
- o Agency field activities of agencies who have not delegated authority downward must submit requests for approval of appointments under this authority to agency headquarters offices after July 1, 1979. OPM stopped handling these requests July 1.

There will be 12 1/2 day training sessions on the use of this authority. The sessions will be held in July and August.

Ms. Heaton informed the attendees that the "Handbook on Selective Placement" will soon be distributed to agencies on the initial requisition list.

Concluding Comments

Mr. Bohling concluded the meeting, by informing the attendees that a Schedule C quota system has been approved. He also reminded agencies to submit one request covering all delegated authorities they desire, rather than submitting one request at a time.

He advised those present that under the approved Schedule C quota system, agencies granted delegation will have a quota which will equal the total number of Schedule C positions each agency has at the time they request delegation. Agencies may request an increase in the quota with reasonable justification. Once delegation has been given, the agency may utilize it in any manner if chooses. However, OPM should continue to be notified of all changes to Schedule C positions.